

# OPC BULLETIN



HOTEL BILTMORE • 55 EAST 43RD STREET • NEW YORK, N.Y. 10017 • (212) 687-2430 • VOLUME 32, NO. 13, JULY 1, 1977

## Court clears Devlin in landmark decision

In a libel case involving *Jack Devlin* of the *New York Times*, the U.S. 2nd Court of Appeals rendered a landmark decision establishing the right of the press to report controversial charges "without assuming responsibility for them."

*The Times* and a National Audubon Society official had been sued for \$12 million over a 1972 Devlin article that reported an Audubon charge that "segments of the pesticide industry and certain scientist-spokesmen" had lied about the effects of DDT on birdlife. Three scientists mentioned in the article won a \$61,000 decision in the lower court.

Devlin's story stemmed from a charge printed in an Audubon publication. He spoke with the two of the three scientists he was able to reach whom an Audubon official had named among those who allegedly distorted Audubon statistics. Devlin's article included their vigorous denial of the charges and their statements.

On June 2, 1977, *Newsday* ran a full-page condemnation of the ruling of Chief Judge Irving R. Kaufman. One paragraph states:

"It is clear here, that Devlin reported Audubon's charges fairly and accurately. He did not in any way espouse the society's accusations: Indeed, Devlin published the maligned scientists' outraged reactions in the same article that contained the society's attack. *The Times* article, in short was the exemplar of fair and dispassionate reporting of an unfortunate but newsworthy contretemps. Accordingly, we hold that it was privileged under the First Amendment."

Judge Kaufman also made the following points:

- "We do not believe that the press may be required under the First Amendment to suppress newsworthy statements merely because it has serious doubts regarding the truth. Nor must the press take up cudgels against dubious charges in order to publish them without fear of liability for defamation."

- "If we are to enjoy the blessings of a robust and unintimidated press we must provide immunity from defamation suits where the journalist believes, reasonably and in good faith, that his report accurately conveys the charges made."

But, Kaufman warned: "a publisher who espouses or concurs in the charges made by others, or who deliberately distorts these statements to launch a personal attack of his own on a public figure, cannot rely on a privilege of neutral reportage. He assumes responsibility for the underlying accusations."

—Matt Bassity

EAT, DRINK WITH US AT OPC!

## CALENDAR

**Monday, July 4** — Independence Day. The Club will be closed.

**Thursday, July 7, 5:30 p.m.** — At Home with Steve Hyatt Yolen, chief South America correspondent, Fairchild Publications.

**RESERVATIONS:** Please call Mary Novick, 687-2430. Reservation cancellations must reach the OPC 24 hours before the event, otherwise members will be charged the announced fee.

## Levitas tells about our changing Times

Mike Levitas is right.

"*The New York Times* is something everybody wants to know something about."

The good attendance at the Shop Talk session on June 15, the sharp questions and the keen attention to his comments proved the editor of the *Times*' Sunday "Week in Review" correct.

Despite some criticism, the *Times* seemed to find much favor — and even affection — among OPC writers, editors and press people at the session.

Levitas, who joined the *Times* in 1965 as an editor and writer and later served as Metropolitan Editor, pointed out:

- The current increased use of "reporters notes, better use of pictures, horizontal makeup, talkers, Men-in-the-News, interviews, explainers, follow-up in the news, were once planned features for a proposed afternoon paper to be published by the *Times*. These features have found their way to the now 'new' *New York Times*."

- Despite the "hours and hours" it takes to put out the paper, the average reader spends 20 minutes reading it.

- Almost half of the *Times*' circulation is in the suburbs and many readers buy the paper only two or three times a week. (The *Times* now has four suburban sections).

- *Times* circulation is 1.6 million on Sunday; 875,000 to 900,000 daily.

Levitas did not get drawn into the debate initiated by *Daily News* metropolitan editor Dick Oliver, who charged at an earlier Shop Talk meeting that the broadcast media are not fulfilling their responsibility "to provide coverage" of the New York area.

"They do their thing, we do ours," said Levitas, adding, "sometimes we help each other; sometimes we rap each other."

## Quigg lauds AP on 70th birthday

"Seventy roaring, aching, inventive, and never timid years" were celebrated in Senior Editor H.D. Doc Quigg's warm and colorful elegy to United Press International on its 70th birthday last month.

From the 1907 "hand-flicked dot-dash of Morse code on a telegrapher's 'bug' to 369 client newspapers (at) 12,000 words a day at top speed of 50 words a minute," the service has grown into computers and satellites serving 6,972 subscribers worldwide at delivery speed up to 1,200 words a minute, the veteran OPCer reported.

In between he described memorable reporters, including: sports writing. Harold Jacobs, and his Mexican-revolution expense account for 'one mule, shot out from under me.' Harrison Salisbury, writing... of the possibility that Hitler would turn on Russia in a few days — and getting a call that night that it was happening."

He recalled the famed admonition that so often closed wires to bureaus to "Remember WH MM" — WH being the telegraph code for Omaha, and the phrase recalling old-timer Bill Shepherd's formula for simple factual writing: "I just write for the Omaha mailman."

Unexplainably, Quigg's otherwise thorough tale omitted mention of the admonition that became even more celebrated at UPI: "Downhold." Copy editors, no doubt. —George E. Burns

## Yolen (Steve, that is) to have 'at home' at OPC on July 7

Steve Yolen, chief South American correspondent for Fairchild Publications, will be an "At Home" guest here Thursday, July 7, at 5:30 P.M.

Yolen was cited by the club two years ago for writing on Latin America.

Before joining Fairchild, Yolen was for eight years with UPI in Puerto Rico, Argentina and Brazil. He ended his UPI stint as general manager of the Brazil Bureau. He also nearly ended his news career when he covered the Chile revolution on his hands and knees, filing for 36 hours without raising his head above the window sill. His office took about 200 bullets.

His Brazilian wife Maria Lucia will accompany him on his home leave tour of the United States, as will his father, Will Yolen.

## De Rochemont recalls radio's Ben Grauer

The following tribute was made to the late Ben Grauer at the annual meeting of the Correspondents' Fund by Richard de Rochemont, and was forwarded to the Bulletin for the benefit of OPCers by the trustees of the fund.

At Campbell's the other day, Ben got praise from some of the great of the communications industries, and from his bibliophile friends. Some of the praise came from the show-business side of journalism, national figures like Walter Cronkite, Mike Wallace and Barbara Walters, whose roles are not unlike that which Ben Grauer held in the days of radio news. Then Ben's voice was as well known as are the voices and faces of today's stars.

Ben had come up through the ranks of show-business, beginning as a child actor, and, as was pointed out at the funeral, posed for Buster Brown in the ad for Buster Brown Shoes. Though he remained always a competent dramatic actor, and an extraordinarily gifted ad libber and improviser, with everything needed to be a star (except perhaps a few inches in height) his deepest interest seemed to me to be in the serious side of journalism and the people who practice it. In 1951 he became an active member of the Overseas Press Club, and soon a member of its Board of Governors, and in 1959 its vice-president.

In May, 1963 he was elected to the Correspondents' Fund as a trustee, and served an exceptional four terms as president (1969-70-71-72).

Since that time, as Chairman of our Executive Committee, and as our Treasurer, up to the week of his death, Ben devoted himself unhesitatingly to the Fund's purpose: aid and comfort to those of our various crafts and professions in present and future need.

I have not dwelt on the personal qualities of Ben Grauer, for now it has all been said and re-said. He was worthy of all the praise, for his goodness, his good humor, and his loyalty to his friends, colleagues, and to his concept of his profession. We at the Correspondents' Fund are, and always will be, grateful for the years and the devotion he gave us.

## Bassity protests Toth's detention

The OPC formally protested to the Soviet Union the detention of *Los Angeles Times* Moscow correspondent Robert Toth last month.

In a telegram to Soviet Ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin, OPC President Matt Bassity said:

The Overseas Press Club of America joins the State Department and the Carter Administration in deploring the detainment and harassment of Robert C. Toth, Moscow correspondent of the *Los Angeles Times*. As a party to the Helsinki convention of 1975, the Soviet Union agreed to improve the working conditions of foreign journalists. We hereby urge a return to the spirit of the pact which the Soviet Union signed and that Toth be allowed to return to the United States.

## Reunion Committee-how it got that way

The Bulletin, from time to time, has run special articles on the club's history, as a touch of nostalgia for older members, perhaps a hint of their heritage for the younger ones, and as a historic record. Ed Cunningham, when he prepared some remarks about his activities as head of the Reunion Committee the night he was honored by the OPC, probably didn't realize he was writing another in this series of chapters of OPC history. Others recognized it, though, and here, in excerpts, it is.

I understand this was to be a modestly enlarged session of the OPC Friday Night Sewing Circle — otherwise known as The Bar Crowd. I didn't expect all this. Which leaves me a little overwhelmed.

I want to set the record straight. Despite what's been said here tonight, the OPC Reunion Committee was never a one-man show. Ever since 1958, when we put on our first Remagen Bridge Reunion, it's been a committee effort. Which is why Don Coe and Elmer Lower, Joe Willicombe and Charley Gillett, Joe Dine and Min Miller, Art Milton, Gordon Fraser, and Lindsey Nelson deserve a heavy share of the plaudits being passed around here tonight.

Remagen Night, like the Remagen Bridge itself, was an accident. It happened because an Army historian, Ken Heckler, wrote a book about the unexpected capture of that bridge across the Rhine River — and its importance as a turning point in World War II.

Ralph Martin, a friend of Ken Heckler's from the Adlai Stevenson campaigns, suggested Heckler's book might make a good OPC book night. When the book night fell through, John Wilhelm suggested a reunion of the correspondents who covered the Remagen story. We held it with John Wilhelm, George Hicks, Hal Boyle, Sigrid Schultz, Lee Carson, Ira Wolfert, Ann Stringer, Cy Peterman. Plus about 50 or 60 other people — including, of course — Charley Gillett whose 9th Armored Division had captured the Remagen Bridge. And, in mid-1958, the Reunion Committee became official.

BERLIN NIGHT, in September 1958, was our first official reunion. The eyewitness panel that night bridged the years in Berlin from 1914 to 1958 — starting with Paul Ansel Mowrer, and moving on to Otto Tolischus, Louie (Continued on page 2)



## More background needed on Israel Rapoport says

**Azarin Rapoport**, Consul and Press Information Officer for Israel, spoke to members on "A Press Attache Takes a Hard Look at News Coverage of Israel," at the OPC June 21.

The Israeli spokesman said that while Israel is well-covered in the news media, background information that often is necessary to understand the news is almost never given. He pointed out that he had a high admiration for the free press around the world, but would like "more background of the history of controversial issues."

He observed that the *New York Times* had "reminded readers for three weeks that Rabin had lied about his Swiss bank account," but he couldn't find a word in the U.S. news media about an international conference involving the highest echelon of 28 countries to discuss the role of media in "reporting Israeli conflicts" to achieve better understanding of such events.

Rapoport said that Israel's struggle of the last 29 years was more than just one for survival. "We share democratic thinking," he said. "Israel provides moral background for the world and for the Jewish community. Even non-Jews are aware that the survival of the working, beleaguered democracy of Israel is important to everyone."

Because 42 percent of Israel's taxes and gross national product go to national defense, Israel can't afford to propagandize its cause, while Arab money is used to finance anti-Israeli publications in the United States, Rapoport said. He added that the anti-Israel campaign at the United Nations is part of an overall campaign to discredit Israel to the United States and to the world.

Rapoport urged that the news of Israel be given background and perspective so that his country's world image might be changed.

—Rosalind Moore

## SIGN UP A NEW MEMBER

FIRST CLASS

Overseas Press Club of America, Inc.  
Hotel Biltmore, 55 East 43rd Street  
New York, N.Y. 10017

## LETTERS

To the Editor:

Having just returned from Munich, I can report that the International Press Club there will receive any OPC member with courtesy and warmth.

The Munich Press Club occupies an attractive suite of rooms on the Marienplatz, the center of the town and one of the most attractive spots in urban Europe. The windows on the club open on a scene of perpetual activity on the square below, often very interesting and colorful activity. (I heard one group of anti-armaments demonstrators there giving out with a stirring version of "We Shall Overcome.") Across the way is the Rathaus, the City Hall, with its famous clock figures that go into their traditional performance every morning at 11 o'clock. The club is located on the fourth floor of the Peterhof Restaurant, itself a spot worth a visit.

Munich, incidentally, is a good newspaper town with five (5!) daily papers, and a couple of sports weeklies. The papers are *Bild*; *tz*, *Abendzeitung*, *Muenchner Merkur* and the local version of the *NY Times*, the *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*...not bad these days for a city with only a fraction of New York's population — New York, with its skimpy three.—*Richard Hanser*

To the Editor:

The head on a Page 1 story in the June 1 *Bulletin* read: "Governors approve four-year phase-in toward equal dues." It should have read: "Governors approve four-year phase-out of membership."

Because of inflation a hike in dues is probably justified. But a \$100 hike? Certainly dues of \$175 a year will not only discourage prospective members but will also encourage present members to quit.

Either the Board is blinded by its own optimism or actually wants to reduce the membership. In any case, it's highly doubtful that an action of this sort will put the Club "on a more sound fiscal basis."

Incidentally, I'm not speaking for myself. As a retired member I presume that I would be exempt from the \$175 dues. —*Jerome S. Kriska*

The OPC President replies:

Actually, this isn't a hike in all the members dues. For most resident members, Active and Associate the dues have been \$175 for many years. In order to attract more working journalists the Club reduced their dues to \$75 in 1972 but in January, 1973 froze dues for then — Active members at \$175. As a result, the increase — which is stretched out over a four year period — only affects 122 members out of a total membership of almost, 1,600.

So what we are doing is asking a relatively few to gradually reach the same dues level that most older members have been paying all along. The Board of Governors decided that it would only be fair for all members to be treated alike. —*Matt Bassity*

### NEW MEMBERS

**Active Resident**  
Juergen Teidt  
**Active Non-Resident**  
Earl V. Anderson  
Marylou Humphrey  
**Active Overseas**  
Charles E. Adelsen  
Joseph A. Harriss  
**Associate Resident**  
Harold Hazelrigg  
Gene Kacson  
Marguerite Vauclair  
Vernon L. Smith

**Associate Non-Resident**  
Nelson Joyner, Jr.  
Carol Z.R.S. Nichols

**Affiliate**  
Peter Terranova

### REINSTATEMENT

**Active Resident**  
George Bates  
**Associate Resident**  
John R. Barrington

## WHO, WHAT, WHERE

By GRACE NAISMITH

**PUBLISHING:** William Safire's novel, "Full Disclosure," a Doubleday book, is "The Washington book of the year."...**Robin Moore**, with Barbara Fuca, has written "Mafia Wife," published by Macmillan...**Mike Slosberg's** "The August Strangers" is a novel with a Westport, Conn. background (Dial)... London-based **Henry Nelson** has co-authored, with Terence Prittle, formerly diplomatic correspondent of The Guardian, a book on the Arab trade boycott of Israel. Title: "The Economic War Against the Jews." Publisher Random House. The book will be out in September. Nelson and Prittle are in pr — International Public Relations/Public Affairs.

**TRAVELING:** Nat Goldstein, long-time special assistant to *The New York Times*, and pr in Goldstein and Raubkin, has just returned from a visit with *Times* foreign correspondents, including John Burns in Johannesburg, Alvin Shuster in Rome, Bill Farrell in Jerusalem and Johnny Appel in London. Shuster, after 30 years at *The Times*, is leaving to become chief editorial writer for *The Los Angeles Times*... **Ed Thompson**, editor-in-chief of The Reader's Digest, and **Ed Kolsby**, art director of RD international editions, have been in Jackson Hole, Wyo. with 80 editors and officials from 22 foreign countries where the Digest is published. The worldwide editorial conference was a first such event sponsored by RD...**Michael Stern** was a recent guest at "Il Saraceno" Grand Hotel of Amalfi, Italy, the new and the distinctive hotel high above the blue waters of the Mediterranean, with the result that the manager, Prof. Nico De Biasi, has offered all OPC members who come to the resort a 15% discount. Plus VIP treatment... From **Patrick E. Nieburg**, public affairs officer for the U.S. Consulate General, Istanbul, comes word of U.S. newsmen attending the Turkish elections: **Dennis Redmont**, Rome; Joe Axel Morris, *L.A. Times*, Athens; Doug Roberts of VOA; Jordan Bofante, Time, Inc; Steve Roberts, *New York Times*, Athens; and John Akkerman, NBC, Athens... **Aaron Einfrank** in Jerusalem.

**MOVING:** **Carl Koch**, from Dusseldorf to Rudolf Hilferdingstr. 76, 6 Frankfurt/M-Nordweststadt, Germany... **Malka Rabinowitz**, N.Y. correspondent of *The Jerusalem Post*, can be reached at: *The Jerusalem Post*, Room C-321, New York, 10017.

### CUNNINGHAM (Cont'd from page 1)

Lochner, Freddy Kuh, Wally Duell, Bill Shirer, Sigrid Schultz, Quent Reynolds, Vic Bernstein, Pete Huss and *Wes Gallagher*, who had just returned from Berlin. Dick Gottelett was the MC and the guest speaker was General Tunnell — who ran the Berlin Airlift during the Russian blockade.

**MOSCOW NIGHT** was our next effort. That panel covered 40 years of eyewitness news in Russia. Starting with Max Eastmen, in the 1919 period, and then on to Louis Disher, Eugene Lyons, John Scott, Harrison Salisbury, Whit Bassow, Joe Newman, Paul Nivin (who has just been kicked out of Moscow) and the *New York Times'* Bill Jordan, who arrived back in New York just a couple of hours before the dinner. OPC President *Tom Whitney*, another old Moscow hand, MC'd that night and the CIA's Allen Dulles, who had never been to Moscow — but knew a lot about it — was the guest speaker.

## Obituary

**Walter V. Carty**, senior vice president of Hill & Knowlton public relations firm, died June 15 in New York. He had worked earlier for the *Boston Pilot* and *Herald-Traveler*, for *Time Magazine*, and for Curtis Publishing.

**HONORED:** **Barney G. Cameron**, recently retired president Pittsburgh Press, and formerly v.p. business manager *N.Y. Herald-Tribune*, has been given a citation at his alma mater, Willamette University. Class of '33, he doesn't look a day older.

**VISITING PROF:** **M.D. Morris** at the University of Cornell at Ithaca, N.Y. for the summer. He has recently completed a writing project in Washington for the Peace Corps and Vista.

**ANOTHER FOUNDATION:** **Barney Oldfield** establishing his third foundation — the AWA Foundation which will make grants to college students in journalism and broadcasting who do outstanding work on aero-space subjects. A project of Litton Industries, of which Barney is corporate director of special missions.

**SEEN ON THE SCENE:** Stan Carter of Washington, with new OPC member, **David Oestricher**.

**WORTH SEEING:** "Homage to Chagall — the Colours of Love," written and produced by **Harry Rasky** of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. At the Little Carnegie.

**BOB CONSIDINE** Scholarship at Ohio University to Belinda Scrimenti. And **Cornelius Ryan** Foreign Correspondence Internships to Michell Horak and Tim Keeley.

**RE-ELECTED**, for the third year, **Elmer W. Lower** of ABC, president of the Correspondents Fund. **Ralph Jules Frantz**, formerly with the *N.Y. Herald-Tribune*, was also re-elected secretary. Frantz will serve as treasurer until a permanent treasurer can be elected to take the place of **Ben Grauer**, who died June 1. **Stanley Swinton**, AP, was re-elected as chairman of the executive committee.

**NEW LOOK:** **Robert E. VanWagoner** has been named metropolitan p.r. director of Conrail's commuter rail operations in N.Y.

## Trans Union Corporation

is an international transportation services company with offices around the world. It leases rail cars in the U.S., Canada, Mexico and the U.K., charters LASH and conventional ships and helps U.S. and foreign companies transport and market products abroad. The growth-oriented company also is active in water pollution control, condominium land development, credit service bureaus and finance leasing.

Helping tell the story of  
Trans Union Corporation  
and other business leaders is the business of

## Burson-Marsteller

PUBLIC RELATIONS/PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEW YORK • CHICAGO • LOS ANGELES •  
WASHINGTON • PITTSBURGH • TORONTO  
BRUSSELS • FRANKFURT • GENEVA • LONDON •  
PARIS • STOCKHOLM • STUTTGART  
HONG KONG • SINGAPORE •  
TOKYO • KUALA LUMPUR



## OPC BULLETIN

Published on the 1st and 15th of each month by the Overseas Press Club of America, Inc., Air-mailed to members overseas. First-class mail to others.

*William J. Wilson*, Chairman and Editor; *Matt Bassity*, *Ruth Biemiller*, *George Burns*, *Blythe Foote Finke*, *Ben G. Frank*, *Thomas J. Kraner*, *Ralph Leviton*, *Rosalind Moore*, *Grace Naismith*, *Rebecca Riger*.